

Cindy Prizio
Executive Director
One Standard of Justice
(203) 680-0567
PO Box 461
New Canaan, Ct 06840



www.OneStandardOfJustice.org

OSJ believes any sexual offense is one too many. We advocate on behalf of people convicted of sexual offenses. We support creating safer communities through rational, evidence-based criminal justice reform, prevention of sexual harm, and healing through restorative justice.

Testimony before the Judiciary Committee's Public Hearing on 3/14/2022

Support SB 387 – *An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee*

Support SB 392 – *An Act Concerning Statements Made by Juveniles*

Oppose SB 16 – *An Act Addressing Gun Violence and Juvenile Crime*

Oppose SB 365 – *An Act Concerning Juvenile and Criminal Justice Reforms*

Oppose SB 386 – *An Act Concerning a Study of the Juvenile Delinquency Laws of this State*

Oppose HB 5417 – *An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice and Services and Firearms Background Checks*

Oppose HB 5418 – *An Act Revising Juvenile and Criminal Justice*

To all esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Cindy Prizio, and I am Executive Director of *One Standard of Justice*, an organization that stands up for fair and equitable treatment of those in our community burdened with great stigma and injustice. We demand that those who have committed sexual offenses, as well as the survivors of those offenses, be allowed to benefit from best practices based on sound research and democratic principles. We support people, not crime.

We would be remiss not to take this opportunity to thank Representative Dubitsky who supports “evidence-based research rather than proposals based on feelings.”

We had a visceral response here today hearing so many people use labels rather than person-first language. Even if one does not value all human beings, why label someone with what you don't want them to be?

For more information on person-first language, visit: <https://sajrt.blogspot.com/2018/05/person-first-language-establishing.html>

OSJ is here to support the work of the CT Justice Alliance (CTJA) and the Juvenile Justice Political Oversight Committee (JJPOC).

Oppose SB 16 – *An Act Addressing Gun Violence and Juvenile Crime*

While OSJ opposes SB 16, the only redeeming factor, which Jeremy Stein shared earlier, is in Section 33: Gun Reduction Strategies, Prevention, Intervention. Here we would strongly suggest implementation of Restorative Justice for harm reduction / reducing recidivism, real accountability, changed behavior, and healing for individuals, families, and communities.

May we recommend this webinar co-sponsored by Senator Winfield. In it Seema Gajwani speaks about the use of Restorative Justice in Washington, DC to address serious, violent crime.

<https://onestandardofjustice.org/webinar-restorative-justice-program-for-youth-and-adults/>

Oppose SB 365 – *An Act Concerning Juvenile and Criminal Justice Reforms*

Oppose HB 5417 – *An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice and Services and Firearms Background Checks*

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We are appalled at the thought of incarcerating any of our adolescents, and so we oppose transferring anyone under 21 to adult courts, let alone a 13-year-old.

Unlike what was said by Representative Devlin, it is most definitely unnecessary to “automatically transfer certain offenses, including sexual assault, to adult court.”

Neurological research states impulse control and decision making controlled by the brain don’t mature until age 25 for a person with little to average trauma. For adolescents with above average trauma in their early lives, that age can easily go up to 30. We should be asking our young people not “what you did” but “what happened to you?”

Youth crime follows the age-old trajectory called the Age Crime Curve. The vast majority of adolescents will naturally age out of criminal behavior – or desist. There are things that can promote aging out or halt it so that the behavior continues into adulthood.

An arrest or incarceration creates more anger, shame, and resentment, especially when the youth feels the systemic biases and injustice of our carceral system, particularly racism.

It also exposes our youth to others with deviant behavior, denies them resources, and triggers mental health issues including stress, anxiety, PTSD, and depression. It can also exacerbate existing undiagnosed mental health issues, especially among our youth of color and poor children.

It is time to move away from punishment and start addressing the needs of our children including food, quality education, mentors in their lives, safe and stable housing, safe communities, healthcare, and love. If punishment worked, we would not be here today dealing with the same old problems. Last year the JJPOC wrote a fantastic list of recommendations, sadly most of which were denied. Let's bring them back in their entirety. We must stay the course and follow our hearts and the data to a better CT.

We are testifying in opposition to the aforementioned bills because they are rooted in false claims that Connecticut is experiencing tremendously high rates of crime being committed by youth.